

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**HICKORY** — The Kontras Quartet, the Western Piedmont Symphony quartet in residence, will give two free performances in April for persons 60 or older in Catawba County.

The group will perform at the Claremont Seniors Morning Out site at Bethlehem United Methodist Church at 9:30 a.m. on April 11. They will perform at the Maiden Seniors Morning Out location, in the Maiden Recreation Center, at 9 a.m. April 10.

“This is our gift to the seniors living in these areas,” said Jan Shaffer, who supervises the Senior Nutrition Program of Catawba County Social Services. Members of the public who are 60-plus years old are invited. They do not have to be current participants in the Seniors Morning Out.

The morning will include the concert by the Kontras Quartet followed by a free lunch. Anyone wishing to attend must register at least 24 hours in advance by calling the site coordinator. Those wishing to attend the concert at Claremont should call Wendy Thomas at 828-320-0434 between 8:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Those wishing to attend the Maiden event should call Loretta Hefner at 828-320-5966 between 8 a.m. and noon, Monday through Friday.



Kontras began its professional touring career in 2009 and has been garnering acclaim ever since. The quartet is all the more unique in that its members — violinists Dmitri Pogorelov and Francois Henkins, violist Ai Ishida and cellist Jean Hatmaker — hail from four different parts of the world.

The quartet is currently in the second year of its tenure as the Hickory Metro Resident Quartet with the Western Piedmont Symphony in Hickory. Kontras

competed with other seasoned string quartets from across the country to win the residency, which was established in conjunction with Chamber Music America in 1999. As the focal point of their residency, Kontras presents a series of chamber music concerts, sponsored by the Friends of the Quartet, throughout the season. The members also serve as principals of the orchestra while in residence.

In addition to offering fresh interpretations of the established string quartet canon, the Kontras Quartet is a firm advocate of new and unfamiliar compositions from each of their native countries — Russia, South Africa, Japan and the USA.

With dozens of performances to its name every season, Kontras is passionate about reaching people of diverse backgrounds through music and cultivating enthusiasm for music in people of all ages, and has been awarded grants to support their outreach activities in non-traditional venues.

Kontras, which means “contrasts” in violinist Francois Henkins’ native Afrikaans language, debuted in Chicago after the four musicians met while performing in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. The quartet’s members hold graduate degrees in performance from DePaul University, Indiana University, the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, and the Chicago College of Performing Arts.

The Kontras Quartet is the Hickory Metro Quartet in Residence under the auspices of the Western Piedmont Symphony. This project was supported by the United Arts Council of Catawba County through the North Carolina Arts Council, with funding from the State of North Carolina and the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.

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